

Natural Resources

General Overview

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was established as the Geological Survey Office in 1837, and is responsible for the stewardship and management of natural resources and provision of recreation opportunities. In 1921, the Department of Conservation was created, making the DNR responsible for fisheries, game, forest fire, parks, and water pollution. The Department of Conservation was renamed the Department of Natural Resources in 1968 with the enactment of Public Act 380.

In 1995, Governor John Engler issued Executive Order 1995-18, which separated the environmental and natural resources functions of the DNR into two separate departments. The new Department of Environmental Quality focuses on environmental regulatory programs, and the DNR focuses on programs for recreation, and forest, wildlife, and fisheries management.

The DNR is headquartered in Lansing, but a majority of the staff works out of dozens of offices across the State. The DNR has 2,086.4 appropriated FTEs. The Department annually publishes a "Management Plan" to provide additional in-depth information.

Major Divisions and Programs

Fisheries Management. This division protects and enhances populations and habitat of fishes and other forms of aquatic life.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management. This division protects and manages the use of a healthy forest resource base for social, recreational, environmental, and economic benefits and promotes the responsible leasing of State-owned mineral resources.

Law Enforcement. This division enforces Michigan natural resources laws, and provides safety education programs.

Parks and Recreation. This division designs, develops, and manages Michigan's State parks, recreation areas, and boating facilities.

Wildlife Management. This division enhances, restores, and conserves the State's wildlife resources, natural communities, and ecosystems.